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Statement at the General Policy Debate of
the 209th Executive Board

HE Mr YANG Jin
Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of China
to UNESCO

Room I, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 3 July 2020

Chairperson of the Executive Board,
President of the General Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, colleagues,

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our work and life and brought enormous challenges to the humankind. China appreciates Mr Chairperson's effort to ensure that the Board carries out its mandate in this special time. Chinese thanks the Director-General for her comprehensive introduction and salutes the Director General and the Secretariat under her stewardship for creating new working modalities to keep the Organization operational and respond actively to the impact of COVID-19.

The fight against COVID-19 has brought home the

imperative urgency of upholding multilateralism, strengthening solidarity and cooperation, and constructing the community of shared future for humankind. Upholding the Constitution, promoting poverty alleviation through education, science, culture and information and communication, hunger and disease reduction to comprehensively and truly promote and achieve human rights is the sacred mission of the Organization we should never relinquish.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, China has enhanced our support to the Organization in many ways. China firmly supports UNESCO's leadership in its mandate and its Global Priority Africa and gender equality. China supports SIDS' effort to address the impact of the pandemic and climate change and calls for enhanced support in these regards. To follow up on the outcome of the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, which was jointly chaired by President Xi Jinping of China, President Macky Sall of Senegal and President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, the UNESCO-Africa-China tripartite high level dialogue was successfully held online. It put forward effective measures in support of Priority Africa, including collaboration in building online platforms, developing and teaching online courses and provision of online teaching equipment, to innovatively ensure

the right to education of girls and boys.

Mr Chairperson, colleagues,

UNESCO is an organization of intellectual cooperation. It must be able to propose forward-looking ideas. In the preparation of 41 C/4 and 41 C/5, China calls on the Organization to focus on its comparative advantages. The preparation work should follow the principle of centering on member states needs and create a mechanism to include active participation by Member States, so that the documents thus produced will provide assurance for the achievement of 2030 SDGs. UNESCO should reposition itself through strategic transformation and produce more targeted solutions to address the global challenges. China will actively participate in the whole process of preparation.

Exchange and mutual learning of civilizations are an important driving force for the advancement of human civilization and peaceful development of the world. The UNESCO Silk Road project is a landmark in promoting dialogue of civilizations and cultural diversity. China believes that the importance of this project should be fully understood and support to the project should be increased in every way to further expand its influence and improve its actual effect. China is actively preparing for the 44th World Heritage Committee

meeting and will discuss with the Committee Members and the Secretariat to confirm the date of the meeting after taking into consideration the international development of the pandemic. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1970 Convention. China calls on UNESCO to take substantive measures within the framework of the Convention to promote the return of cultural property illicitly appropriated.

Since the 1970s, the Faure Report and Delors Report, published by UNESCO, have had a long-lasting impact on the thinking of education and education development in the world. The Delors Report quotes an ancient Chinese wise saying: when the wind of change comes, some build a wall, and some build windmills. We need to build more and bigger windmills in the era of globalization in the 21st Century. As a scholar of education and lifelong learning, I fully understand that today's education development urgently needs forward-looking research. China is ready to contribute its wisdom to the Future of Education report.

Artificial intelligence is an important area of international cooperation in the post-COVID-19 era. China appreciates Director-General's focus on artificial intelligence and supports UNESCO to play its part in artificial intelligence and effectively implement the Beijing Consensus adopted by the International

Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education in 2019, so that people around the world can benefit from the achievements of modern science and technology development.

Thank you.